

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

July 11, 2016

Lincoln

PRESENT: Hagenow, Pattacini, Pazda, Scappaticci, Stefanovicz, Thames

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Geary, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Radikas

ABSENT: Jacobsen, Leon, Stafford

A. OPENING

A.1. & 2. Meeting Called to Order

Chairperson Pattacini called the meeting back to order at 7:00 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mr. Pattacini.

A.3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of June 27, 2016. Secretary Scappaticci moved and Ms. Pazda seconded the motion.

6/0 – Voted in favor.

A.4. Recognition of Mary-Jane Pazda and Patricia Brooks

Mr. Pattacini recognized Mary-Jane Pazda's service as a Board member. Mr. Geary noted she made a consistent contribution to the Board of Education, specifically in the area of curriculum and instruction. Mr. Geary presented her with the book *Pete the Cat's Groovy Guide to Life*.

Ms. Hagenow thanked Ms. Pazda for her time and dedication, stating she always put the needs of the children first.

Ms. Stefanovicz thanked Ms. Pazda for her service and for being someone to lean on, who listened and provided guidance.

Mr. Thames thanked Ms. Pazda for her service and noted she was a pleasure to work with. He wished her lots of luck.

Mr. Scappaticci recalled he first met Ms. Pazda when he worked part-time at MCC and visited her English 66 class. At that time Ms. Pazda was running for the Board of Education and he voted for her, even though she was not in the same political party. Mr. Scappaticci noted that with this Board it doesn't matter which party each member is on, they all have common goals. Last, Mr. Scappaticci stated he admires Ms. Pazda's leadership style.

Mr. Pattacini noted that Ms. Pazda's educational background and experience helped the Board all grow, providing perspective as a lifelong educator sharing her knowledge. Being on the Board twice, Ms. Pazda has always been a leader and given advice and council. She has shared her wisdom and listened to others points of view. He noted that Ms. Pazda always had the best interests of kids in mind.

Ms. Pazda stated it has been a great pleasure serving with phenomenal Board members in a non-partisan way for our children. She will miss having conversations around how to best serve the children. Ms. Pazda feels we have fabulous leadership moving us forward in ways we have not been able to in the past and she is looking forward to serving Manchester in a different way.

Mr. Geary called Mrs. Brooks to the podium to present her with a graduation certificate along with a copy of *Pete the Cat's Groovy Guide to Life*. He noted that Mrs. Brooks began her career with Manchester the same time the current graduating class did, so it is fitting that she "graduate" with them. Mr. Geary feels Mrs. Brooks has been the glue that held this district together and he will miss her support, kindness and knowledge.

Mr. Scappaticci has always been impressed that no matter what question about the budget was presented, Mrs. Brooks usually had the answer in her head. Her focus has always been on the students. She is impressive and more than a number cruncher. Mr. Scappaticci felt Mrs. Brooks has been warm and welcoming to him. He will miss her and noted she deserves a lovely and happy retirement.

Ms. Hagenow cannot believe this is Mrs. Brooks last meeting and she will be moving to her happy place. She will be missed.

Ms. Pazda thanked Mrs. Brooks for her years of service through a number of different Superintendents. Ms. Pazda has always been impressed with Mrs. Brooks knowledge base, sense of professionalism and leadership. She wishes her well and looks forward to playing golf together in Florida.

Ms. Stefanovicz told Mrs. Brooks it was wonderful getting to know her, stating she is feisty, balanced, and full of wisdom. Mrs. Brooks ties the financials to the hearts of the kids and puts the numbers into perspective.

Mr. Thames thanked Mrs. Brooks for her help in his first two years and appreciates the historical perspective she has shared with him. He wishes her luck and an enjoyable life.

Mr. Pattacini thanked Mrs. Brooks for her service. When he thinks of her integrity comes to mind. He knows our funds are safe and she cares so much about the kids. Mr. Pattacini feels that nobody cried or smiled more at graduation than Mrs. Brooks, noting she “grew up” with the 2016 graduating class. He thanked her for her service to the students.

Mrs. Brooks thanked everyone, noting the kids made her job worthwhile. In her career of 36 years and four districts, Manchester is the one she doesn’t want to leave. She quoted Dr. Kisiel when he said once you work in Manchester you become a part of Manchester in your heart.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

B.1. Curriculum & Instruction Committee

Mrs. Pazda reported the last meeting was held on June 27, 2016. In attendance were Jason Scappaticci, Mary-Jane Pazda, Susan Jacobsen, Amy Radikas, Diane Sheehan-Burns, Santosha Oliver, Beth Hayes, Seanna Francour, Paige LePaige, and Steve Moore. Two items were discussed:

1. Textbook adoption for Mathematics: Dr. Oliver, Beth Hayes, Paige LePaige and Steven Moore shared the results of the pilot conducted for Grade 7 Mathematics, Pre-Algebra and Grade 8 Mathematics. An online component supports home access. Recommendation for adoption was approved by the C&I subcommittee.
2. Textbook adoption for Social Studies: Diane Sheehan-Burns and Seanna Francour shared the results of the pilot conducted for Grade 6 Social Studies. The textbook (Western World) incorporates the recent C3 Framework for Social Studies and incorporates the use of the History Channel to support the integration of Chromebooks. Recommendation for adoption was approved by the C&I subcommittee.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mr. Geary presented two items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval.

C.1. Personnel Action

Details had already been provided to the Board members with their agenda.

C.2. Extended Field Trip Request - Illing Middle School – 8th Grade Washington DC Trip - 200-250 students – March 30, 2017 – April 1, 2017

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Scappaticci moved and Ms. Stefanovicz seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar as outlined in Section C of tonight's agenda.

6/0 - Voted in favor.

D. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

None.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Mike Pohl, 25 Congress Street, felt that Mrs. Pazda's service to the Board has been wonderful. The year she first ran for the Board it was alongside Dr. Silver, Mike Rizzo, and Carl Stafford and it was one of those years where you were sad to only get two votes when you wanted to vote for four people. Her service is to be commended and he thanked her for all she has done to move this district forward. To Mrs. Brooks, Mr. Pohl stated it was a pleasure to serve on the Board when her position was created. He has so much respect for her commitment to the students and residents of Manchester. She will be missed.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, wished Mrs. Brooks good luck in her retirement. He found her professional, courteous and friendly and hopes she enjoys her life. To Mrs. Pazda, he found her professional and someone who always had good things to say. He believes all children can learn and hopes the term subgroup will be scrapped permanently. Mr. Stringfellow went on to suggest articles on the revolutionary war and other historical topics. He suggested the movie *The Legend of Tarzan* and a book on transgender people and 20 myths.

F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

F.1. Update on Board of Education Data Dashboard, Spring Results

Mr. Geary noted it took two years to identify the standardized measures to look at progress. This will drive our resources in a targeted way. Mr. Geary presented the data, which is available on the website. He feels we are trending in the right direction.

Ms. Pazda wondered if kids are coming to school ready to learn and what we are doing to reach out to help through the Family Resource Centers. Mr. Geary noted the Family Resource Centers meet parents and children, providing opportunities for growth to non-school age children. He pointed out we are reaching out to pre-school providers in the area to see how we can help them better prepare the students. He notes this should improve with community and family engagement. Ms. Pazda pointed out that when students come to school unprepared they are behind the 8-ball from the start.

Mr. Geary also noted there are programs offered at the library for children under age 5, which provide socialization. He suggested that everyone has to work together.

Ms. Pazda asked why some grades had the DRA2 and now all have Fountas & Pinnell. Mr. Geary wanted consistency across all grade levels. Fountas & Pinnell gives us the opportunity to address needs.

Ms. Pazda wondered if Washington has all the support staff they need. Mr. Geary noted a new Reading Consultant was recently hired for the fall. He feels the principal, Dr. Jim Collin, is clear in how to address the issues in a broad way along with Ms. Ghetia and Ms. Burns to target learning. They have started regrouping across grade levels K-1 and 2-3. The feeling is that you have to meet the children where they are in order to help them move forward.

Ms. Pazda is concerned that the Special Education students are below grade level. Mr. Geary noted that the grade level expectations are the same across the board. He notes we modify and support students and help them build skills. This all impacts behaviors as well. Ms. Pazda wonders if there is appropriate support staff. Mr. Geary feels in reading there is and that the new reading specialist can connect with the special education teachers. Mr. Geary would like to see more interventionists to work with struggling students, but he is working on it.

Ms. Stefanovicz was amazed with the data and would like to see a snapshot of a cohort. Mr. Geary will work on it.

Mr. Pattacini noted the math fluency increased in the winter significantly. Mr. Geary feels that it may be possible teachers were getting more comfortable with how to teach the newer math. He expects we can continue to see this trend as teachers are doing a better job and are more confident with the material they are delivering.

Ms. Pazda asked about the special education and ELL students graduation rates and skill sets. Mr. Geary noted Dr. Crespo is working on seeing what kids have and what they need in ELL and we are trending in the right direction. Regarding special education, we need to find the balance to meet the students where they are and get the most possible from each child. Ms Pazda noted that support staff are important and wondered if we have enough. Mr. Geary notes that there can never be enough, though he feels we are doing well in grades 7-8, we could do better in grades 9-12 with reading. In math he feels we are in good shape grades 7-12.

Ms. Stefanovicz noted there is an achievement gap in elementary age students with black students and that disparity only grows in high school. Mr. Geary noted that in high school students are leveled. We work to see all bands are represented in all areas, including Honors and AP classes. Right now the upper level classes struggle with that.

Ms. Stefanovicz noted that Verplanck showed 29 students entering Kindergarten ready per the ESI. He wondered what is happening in that area that is helping prepare the children for school. Mr. Geary wondered if maybe the high number of Head Start students in that district was the reason.

Mr. Thames saw a disparity in suspensions across ethnic bands. He notes some schools have a culture and he wonders if we look for trends per school, such as a propensity of some teachers to suspend kids. He notes there is a small group of kids that have multiple suspensions and he wonders if we identify

these children and look for ways to creatively change their behaviors. He notes it is easy to get rid of the problem, but all kids need to learn. Mr. Geary feels we do not change a student's behavior through punishment and we need to do a better job supporting teachers in just how to do that.

Mr. Pattacini was excited to see the data presented this way. He is encouraged that this data will help drive decisions at the school level. He wondered if student's chronic absences correlate with suspensions. Mr. Geary notes we want students to want to come to school. Families sometimes struggle to get kids there and the Family Resource Centers can help connect families with outside resources. He noted that people often assume when a child is chronically absent it is because the family doesn't care, but that is often not the case. Mr. Pattacini is excited about the direction the Board is taking, using data to make changes. He thanked the administration for their work on this.

F.2. Update on Climate & Culture

Mr. Geary noted that recently we were invited to present at a national conference in San Francisco. He presented, along with Christa Perkins, and they were very well received. Mr. Geary notes we are moving away from consequences and using social thinking and Ross Green to change our approach to misbehavior. We no longer use time-outs and loss of recess in punishments.

Ms. Stefanovicz questioned the difference between the severity of the unexpected behaviors. Ms. Perkins noted there is a different response and a push toward restorative activities.

Mr. Thames noted this has been piloted at six schools and he wondered how it is modeled. Mr. Geary noted that in the 14-15 school year five schools started this in just a few classes. They created experts in those schools, and then in the 15-16 school year those teachers rolled out the program to the rest of the building. Now it will be rolled out in the other schools this year. Ms. Perkins has spent time the past two years observing and modeling in classrooms. Mr. Geary noted that they have even worked with noon aides, tutors, paraprofessionals and MELC. Mr. Thames hopes to see a stronger emphasis on working with parents in

the future as he thinks we will find that parents are experiencing the same behaviors at home and will welcome new strategies.

Ms. Pazda asked if this will be in grades K-5 in all buildings this year. Mr. Geary explained that it has already been used in grades K-1 in all buildings and in grades K-5 in six schools. Now it will be Grades K-5 in all schools this year. Ms. Pazda is thrilled with this work and feels it changes Manchester Public Schools from adult centered to child centered and is huge. This reflects the needs of the children and she notes we cannot just focus on academics. Ms. Pazda likes the draft of clear expectations and options for teachers.

Mr. Pattacini thanked Mr. Geary and Ms. Perkins for their work and noted he saw the presentation at the conference and of the 300 people there, Manchester was the only team to receive a standing ovation. That is a tribute to our district. This is a nationwide problem and in order for kids to be successful we need to start early.

G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

H. NEW BUSINESS

None.

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to items on tonight's agenda)

Ms. Tracy Maio, 57 Horton Road, thanked Ms. Pazda for a wonderful job on the Board. Mrs. Brooks, she notes, was always so helpful while Waddell was working on Project Playground. Mrs. Brooks didn't just support the schools and administration and Board, but she supported the PTAs and parents as well. Ms. Maio had a question about the data dashboard and cautioned about how people see "fair" and how to present things to kids. In explaining to parents, they need to know there is not always an immediate response to behavior and it takes time to mold behavior. This may be difficult for parents to understand.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Consent Calendar, especially #2, the trip to Washington DC. He enjoyed the presentation by Mr Geary and feels everyone should be included. Mr. Stringfellow recommended the book *Mindsets* previously and is glad to see that it has been referenced. Hopefully students will not be treated like a number. He recommended *Family Circle* magazine and several articles on recipes, alcohol abuse and Alateen, as well as drugs. Mr. Stringfellow would like to see a presentation on test taking techniques used with special needs students and ESL students. He notes all students have worth. Mr. Stringfellow is glad we are looking at the whole student and not using the term subgroup. Manchester is a good school system.

J. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Ms. Hagenow is curious about an update on the track renovation and the advertising around the track.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Scappaticci moved and Ms. Pazda seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

6/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Scappaticci
Board Secretary

